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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000230

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DEPT FOR S/ES, AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND AF/SPG
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2016

TAGS: PGOV PHUM MOPS PREF PREL US SU

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MASSING OF ARAB MILITIA NEAR GEREIDA

REF: KHARTOUM 00220

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Eric Whitaker, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) An AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) Incident Report dated January 28 states that hostilities between "janjaweed and SLA" took place on January 27 in Donkey Abiad, 17 kilometers northeast of Gereida in South Darfur state, and continued to the afternoon of January 28. The report states that "janjaweed" forces attacked the village, with 40 villagers "allegedly killed" and 23 "allegedly injured and evacuated to Graida hospital." The report notes that the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) had abducted Mahadi tribesmen from Dito. The AMIS report states that the SLA should "release the abducted Mahadi tribesmen from Dito and withdraw from the general area of Graida."

¶2. (C) The UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) Political Officer advised on January 30 that the casualty figures were instead 8 killed and 19 wounded. He described the attacking forces as being composed of Mahadi, supported by Habaniya, Fellata, and Messeria tribesmen. The American Rescue Committee (ARC) report of January 29 cites 9 killed and 19 wounded; the ARC also notes UN reports of 200 families as fleeing from Donkey Abiad to Gereida.

¶3. (C) USAID Darfur Field Office states that the AU conducted aerial reconnaissance of the area on January 29, and did not detect massings of either militias or internally displaced persons (IDPS), burned villages, or other evidence of conflict. The UNMIS Political Officer also states that the number of militia in the Gereida area is "considered to be 1000," and not several thousand. The ARC states that the AU visited Donkey Abiad on January 29 and met with local administration and SLA commanders to urge them to restrain from escalating hostilities. The AU source indicated that the situation had calmed; ARC has cancelled visits to the area pending the results of a joint NGO/WFP assessment scheduled for January 30.

¶4. (C) On January 30, CDA Hume again contacted MFA Under Secretary Saddiq Mutriff, and advised that Ambassador Wall

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and Special Representative Winter had both spoken with SLA leader Mini Minawi to raise concerns about the situation in the Gereida area and to assist in obtaining the release of the two umdas. Minawi responded that would look into the situation, as he was unsure of the facts. Mutriff said that while the situation in the Gereida area was calmer, no resolution was in sight. He also said the government was trying to gain a solution to the conflict, either the return of the umdas or payment of compensation if they were dead. Mutriff criticized AMIS for inaction in the face of open SLA activities in the area, and doing little or nothing to

achieve a peaceful resolution of the issue at hand.
HUME